

line 17, delete "said another" and insert --a
third--.

Please add the following new claim to the application:

B7 --19. A method of treating a sample contained in a cassette using plural vacuum processing chambers according to claim 14, wherein the sample is vacuum treated independently in the respective vacuum processing chamber.--

REMARKS

Subsequent to issuance of the Notice of Allowance in connection with the above-identified application, Applicants propose amending claims 3 and 8, and adding new claim 19 to the application.

Claims 3 and 8 are being amended to recite that "while" exchanging the cassette containing processed samples with another cassette in which unprocessed samples are contained, processing of samples in a third cassette is carried out. In connection with amendments to claims 3 and 8, note original Figs. 1 and 2. See also Applicants' specification at page 5, lines 24-27; page 7, line 21 to page 8, line 14; the first full paragraph on page 11; the third full paragraph on page 11; and the first full paragraph on page 13, of Applicants' specification. It is respectfully submitted that these amendments to claims 3 and 8 do not add new matter to the application.

Applicants are adding new claim 19 to the application, to

more specifically define that aspect of the present invention as set forth in claim 14. Claim 19, dependent on claim 14, recites that the sample is vacuum treated independently in the respective vacuum processing chamber. Note, for example, the paragraph bridging pages 7 and 8 of Applicants' specification. Especially in view thereof, it is respectfully submitted that this new claim 19 does not add new matter to the application.

It is respectfully requested that the present amendments be entered. In this regard, it is respectfully submitted that the present amendments are needed for fuller protection of the invention, and require no substantial amount of additional work on the part of the office. It is respectfully submitted that the proposed amended and new claims require no additional search or examination; that is, claims 3 and 8 are allowable for the same reasons that these claims were previously allowed, and clearly new claim 19 is allowable being dependent on allowed claim 14.

Moreover, it is respectfully submitted that the present amendments are clearly timely. In this regard, note that the original claims were allowed in a first Office Action on the merits in the above-identified application, and that the present amendments constitute Applicants' first opportunity to amend their claims after filing and having a first examination in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

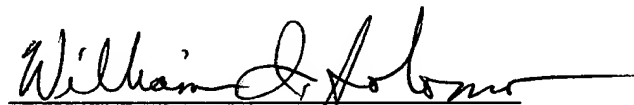
In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that Applicants have made the necessary showing under 37 CFR 1.312(a); and that, accordingly, entry of the present amendments is clearly proper.

In view of all of the foregoing, entry of the present amendments, and issuance of a U.S. patent based on the above-identified application, thereafter, are respectfully requested.

To the extent necessary, Applicants petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR § 1.136. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to the Deposit Account No. 01-2135 (Case No. 503.30414C13) and please credit any excess fees to such Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

ANTONELLI, TERRY, STOUT & KRAUS, LLP

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "William I. Solomon", written over a horizontal line.

William I. Solomon
Registration No. 28,565

1300 North Seventeenth Street
Suite 1800
Arlington, VA 22209
Tel.: 703-312-6600
Fax.: 703-312-6666

WIS/slk